

Allen M. Merrill  
Inscribed 1814

*A History of the Denison  
Family in Canada  
1792 to 1910*



*For the use of the members of the family only*

By ROBERT EVELYN DENISON  
GRIMSBY, CANADA





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*By* **ROBERT EVELYN DENISON**  
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## PREFACE

A few years ago, my brother Reginald in Toronto, asked me to write a short history of the family for the benefit of his sons. I began one, but business engagements prevented its completion, but this winter, I unfortunately have some time to spare, and it occurred to me that the rising generation of Denisons might be interested in learning something of their forebears. Before taking up the Denison family proper, I think it might be interesting to tell something about the relatives left in England, and our ancestor, Capt. Richard Lip-pincott, from whom we take the right to write U.E.L. after our names. It is not very generally known, that an Act was passed by the Government of Canada, giving all United Empire Loyalists and their descendants that privilege, but so modest are those descendants, that I never knew a case, where that legal right was exercised.

I have to thank my cousin, Colonel George T. Denison, for very kindly reading over and correcting the M. S. where necessary, but beyond his assistance, and the authorities quoted, I have had no help from any source, and assume all responsibility for the statements made, and any errors that may inadvertently have occurred. I must thank the members of the family for furnishing the necessary funds for printing this account, and hope sincerely they will not be disappointed with it.

R. E. DENISON, Grimsby.

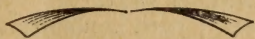
March 1910.

*deceased*  
*before 1930*





## ENGLISH ANCESTRY



In reference to the relatives in England, very distant ones to the present generation, I will quote from Burke's Landed Gentry and "Notes of my Life" by Archdeacon Denison, Archdeacon of Taunton, a very well known and respected man in his day. The Archdeacon corresponded for years with my sister Laura Kate, always addressing her as "cousin". Burke's Landed Gentry states as follows:

### BURKE'S LANDED GENTRY SAYS

Wm. Denison, an eminent merchant of Leeds, purchased the Manor of Ossington, Nottinghamshire 1753, served as High Sheriff 1779, died 1782 and was succeeded in his estates in Nottinghamshire, York, Lincoln and Durham, by his brother Robert, who died in 1785. He was succeeded by his nephew.

### ARCHDEACON DENISON

"I was born Dec. 11, 1805, at Ossington, Nottinghamshire, one of a family of fourteen children, nine sons and five daughters, living to man and woman's estate; the nine sons, and three daughters, my mother's children. My dear father died in 1820, aged 62, he sat in Parliament I think for Colchester, afterwards for Minehead, my dear mother died in 1859 aged 82. Two sons, one daughter are still living; I am the eldest survivor. Six of us were at Eton, one at Harrow; one was brought up for the navy, he died at the age of thirty-one, loved and valued by all who knew him; six were at Oxford as undergraduates; four at Ch Ch, one at Oriel, one at Balliol. My eldest brother John Evelyn Viscount Ossington 1872, married 1827, Lady Charlotte Bentinck, third daughter of the Duke of Portland; and after some thirty years of parliamentary life became Speaker of the House of Commons 1857, resigned 1872, died 1873.

Edward, First Class in Classics, Fellow of Merton became Bishop of Salisbury in 1837, married 1839 Lousia Mary Ker Seymour, 2nd Hon. Clementina Hamilton, 1845, died 1854. William went from Eton to Woolwich then into the Engineers, married 1838 Caroline Hornby After employments at home and abroad he became in 1846 Governor of Van Diemens land; Governor General of Australia K. C. B. 1855; Governor of Madras 1861. After Lord Elgin's death he acted for some months as Governor General of India, died 1871.



Henry, Double First Class Fellow of All Souls, was paralysed by a kick from a horse in Australia; returned to England and after many years of suffering died in 1858.

Stephen, First Class in Classics, Stowell, Fellows of University, married Susan Fellowes in 1845, was for many years Deputy Judge Advocate, died 1871.

Frank was the sailor, died 1841.

Alfred after some twenty years honorable, successful and laborious life in Australia, returned finally to England 1859 and became private Secretary to the Speaker.

Charles was in the 52nd Regiment and became Colonel in it, he had sundry staff appointments in India, and afterwards until compelled by failing health, caused by sunstroke, to retire from active life, was Chief Commissioner of Civil Service at Madras, died 1877.

I was First Class Fellow at Oriel and gained the Chancellor's prizes for Latin and English Essays 1828-1829, married 1838 Georgiana, eldest daughter Rt. Hon. J. W. Henley. My sister Charlotte daughter of my mother's first marriage, married Chas. Manners Sutton, then Judge Advocate, afterwards for seventeen years Speaker of the House of Commons, and Viscount Canterbury.

Matilda, the second sister of the first marriage, married Thomas Smith Esq.; Julia married the Rev. Henry des Voeu; Henrietta, John Henry Jacob Esq. My surviving sister Charlotte is the wife of the Right Hon. Sir Robt. Phillimore. My eldest brother, afterwards Viscount Ossington, who succeeded to the family property 1820, did all and more than all, to help our dear mother in her wise and loving care for us. His own fatherly care for us, and his loving and generous kindness never failed.

The first thing I can recall is looking out of a window in the house at Ossington at my dear father's troop of volunteers in or about 1808."

The last sentence I quote to show that the military instinct was strong in the English branch of the family, as well as in the Canadian. From the quotations made regarding the family in England from "Notes of my life," the Denison branch in Canada have no reason to be ashamed of their overseas cousins.

In connection with the English Denisons, Colonel Denison kindly furnished me with the following information, which I give in his own words. "Viscount Ossington was John Evelyn Denison, formerly Speaker of the House of Commons. His nephew, William Denison is now in possession of his old home and estate, Ossington Hall, Nottingham. A fine old place with a park of several hundred acres about it and a number of farms about. 28-

My wife and daughter and I spent a couple of days at Ossington Hall last summer with William Denison and his wife Lady Elinor, a daughter of Earl Amherst. My wife and I spent a few days with them about 16 years ago."



Lord Ossington was appointed Speaker in 1857 and my mother took a fancy to his name Evelyn and presented it to the writer. The name, originally a man's name is now almost entirely appropriated by the girls, instead of Eveline, and if I sign it when writing strangers, generally get a reply "Dear Madam" or "Dear Miss." My sister Edith had the pleasure of meeting and entertaining two lady members of the same branch of the family in Toronto in the summer of 1906.

I will now endeavor to give you some particulars regarding the Great Great Grand-father of the present generation; Capt. Richard Lippincott of New Jersey, a captain in the New Jersey Volunteers, on the Royalist side, of course, in connection with this I quote from an article that appeared recently in the "Mail and Empire," which is very nearly correct, except that the man who was hanged was a step brother of Capt. Lippincott's wife.

### MOTHER'S APPEAL SAVED HER BOY

#### AN INCIDENT OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

The incident of which the following is a description is of itself so dramatic, so strange, and so connected with interesting portions of history that, being hardly known, it is worth preservation.

There was an Aldermam of the City of London who amassed a large fortune, and was created a baronet by George the Third, by name Charles Asgill. This gentleman married a daughter of Daniel Pratviel, who was then Secretary to the Embassy at Madrid, and had a son Charles, and two daughters. The son entered the army and went to America as a Captain in 1781, under the Marquis Cornwallis.

It was the period of the American War of Independence. He went through the whole of the campaigns and was taken prisoner at the siege of Yorktown in Virginia, with five thousand of the British Army.

Some time previously a rebel Captain, or what we would now call an American named Huddy, had captured, whilst patrolling at night, Capt. Lippincott, an officer in command of a British patrol, and for no other cause but that the latter was a loyalist, hanged him without trial. Lippincott's brother shortly after the occurrence took Huddy prisoner, and in retaliation for his brother's murder he executed Huddy. Consequent on this Gen. Washington ordered thirteen British officers (prisoners) should draw lots, and the one on whom the lot fell should be selected to suffer death in retaliation for Huddy's death. The officers assembled at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and the names of the thirteen were placed in one hat, and another twelve blank pieces of paper, and a thirteenth piece on which was written the word "unfortunate". That piece fell to Capt. Asgill of the Guards. What a fate! Condemned to an ignominious death, suddenly and for no cause that he had the remotest connection with.

*Re Asgill see p. 307, 1904*

He was conveyed, strongly guarded, to a prison in the Jerseys; and there suffered many hardships for six months, daily expecting his execution.

One of the fortunate twelve who did not draw the fatal lot was Sir Charles Gould afterwards Sir Charles Morgan. He returned to England, his family having procured an exchange of prisoners, thus effecting his release, and he was the bearer of the news concerning Captain Asgill to his family. Strange to say he wrote no letter to prepare them, nor even to make himself known, but was ushered into the drawing room of Lady Asgill's house, and found her and another lady sitting there; on hearing the fatal intelligence they both swooned and fell senseless on the floor. Capt. Gould filled with dismay, summoned the servant, who instantly thought the Captain had killed his mistress. When poor Lady Asgill realized the position of her son, she did not remain helpless and inactive. She resolved to write to Count Vergennes, who was in a post of high authority at the Court of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette. The letter was long so I only give some portions of it. She was unknown to him.

"My son, an only son, as dear as he is brave, amiable as he is deserving to be so, only nineteen, a prisoner under articles of capitulation of Yorktown, is now confined in America an object of retaliation. Shall an innocent suffer for the guilty? Represent to yourself, sir, the situation of a family under these circumstances, surrounded as I am by objects of distress, distracted with fear and grief. No words can express my feeling or paint the scene—my husband given over by his physician a few hours before the news arrives, and not in a state to be informed of the misfortune; my daughter seized with a fever, raving in delirium about her brother. Let your feelings sir, plead for my inexpressible misery. Say but a word to General Washington, and my son will be released. His honor carried him to America. He was born to affluence, independence. and the fairest prospects."

Count Vergennes was so moved by this letter that he showed it to the Queen and King; they to whom so soon after no pity was shown, but brutal contempt of their sufferings, were deeply moved.

"The goodness of their Majesties' hearts induce them to desire," writes Vergennes to Washington, "that the inquietudes of an unfortunate mother may be calmed and her tenderness reassured. He wrote at length and very forcibly urging on Washington that if it were possible to avoid extreme rigour and pardon Mr. Asgill it would be very agreeable to their Majesties. "The danger of young Asgill, the tears, the despair of his mother, affect them sensibly, and they would see with pleasure the hope of consolation for the unfortunate family." The ill-fated Queen at that time was still all-powerful. Washington in league with France, was glad to save Asgill, thus pleasing the Queen and answering the dictates of his own heart, ever



inclining to clemency and humanity. He moved his release in Congress, and sent a notification of the same with a very kind letter to Capt. Asgill, in which he said that reprisals were distasteful to him and that he had all along felt for his painful situation, but had delayed writing until he was sure of his release, not wishing to raise false hopes. The letter, after telling him of his freedom concludes thus. "It is no greater relief to you than it is to me sir, your most obedient humble servant G. Washington.

Not a moment did Asgill lose, when the joyful news reached him, in journeying with all speed to comfort and cheer his "distracted family." He hurried to New York, only to find that the ship had sailed; but undaunted, he set sail to chase her in a small boat. Sometimes she is in sight, sometimes lost to view. On he plows the waves in his little craft, his home and all he loves which for six weary months he never expected to see again, to be soon reached if only he can overtake the good ship "Swallow." Fortune favored him, and four leagues out to sea he scrambles up her side without baggage or servant, a free and joyous man.

What a home coming it must have been; and after a happy time spent with his family, he set out for France, and there tendered his grateful thanks to the beautiful and benevolent queen; and again a picture rises before us of the Court of Versailles, then in all its grandeur and beauty. A young and gallant guardsman is ushered in, and bending before Marie Antoinette, thanks her for his honor and life.

## REVOLUTION RECALLED

ROMANTIC STORY OF AMERICAN WAR, HAD A LOCAL INTEREST

"U. E. Loyalist" writes to the Mail and Empire, from Grimsby, Ont., as follows:

"Referring to the very interesting article in Saturday's issue, headed 'Mother's Appeal Saved Her Boy,' it may interest your readers to know that the Captain Lippincott mentioned was one of the early settlers of York, (now Toronto), and died at old "Bellevue" Denison Avenue, Toronto, about the year 1826, and his grave may be seen in St. John's cemetery, Weston, the burying place of the Denison family. Col. George Taylor Denison, the Grandfather of the present Col. G. T. Denison, married Capt. Lippincott's daughter, Esther Borden, and three streets, Lippincott, Esther and Borden, are named in consequence. In justice to the memory of the gallant captain, it is only fair to say that he was tried by court-marital and honorably acquitted, drawing his half pay up to the day of his death."

The moment the Captain found the war was over, he lost no time in leaving the new formed United States for Canada, in company with many other Loyalists, who, after fighting for British connection, refused to live under any other form of government. A

determined effort was made by the authorities to capture him, and he relates that on one occasion, he only escaped capture by hiding under a log, while his pursuers galloped past. Capt. Lippincott, first made his way to New Brunswick, sending his daughter Esther, to a convent to be educated. Among other things, the daughter was taught fancy needlework, and the working of samplers, an art in those days; and in the year 1812, when the wife of my Grandfather, Col. G. T. Denison, Bellevue, Toronto, she worked, very beautifully, a sampler commemorating the fall of the much lamented Brock, the hero and idol of upper Canada.

The sampler hangs framed in my room, and is very highly valued. Lippincott moved to York about the time Simcoe picked on that place for his Capital, and was granted 3,000 acres of land in the Township of Vaughan near Richmond Hill, in addition to this, he retained his captain's half-pay until his death, which occurred at his son-in-law's, Col. G. T. Denison, (Primus) Denison Avenue, at the age of 81 and in the year 1826.

### CAPTAIN JOHN DENISON

I will now take up the Denison family proper beginning with my great grandfather Capt. John Denison.

According to the Church records, John Denison, son of George and Mary Denison, was born at Headon, in Yorkshire, England, Nov. 20, 1755, and Baptised Nov. 27th 1755.

John Denison began his military career at an early age, joining the 2nd York Militia, and soon becoming a Lieutenant, his regiment was afterwards the 65th Regiment, of the Line, for seven years on active service.

In the year 1780, Lieutenant Denison, marched with his regiment to London, to assist in putting down the Lord Gordon riots, the regulars for once, not being trusted by the authorities, so great was the disaffection, and this particular Militia regiment, was officered by men, who must be land owners, and consequently gentleman. I quote this last statement from Lieut. Col. Septimus Denison C. M. G. who took the trouble to make some enquiries regarding the history of the 2nd York.

I now take the liberty of quoting from my uncle, Colonel Geo. T. Denison (secundus) and the Dominion Archivist, Dr. Doughty, "A Chronicle of St. John's Cemetery on the Humber," by Col. G. T. Denison. John Denison the head of the Denison family, in Toronto, who, in his younger days had been a Lieutenant in the 2nd York Militia, afterwards the (65th Regiment of the Line) for seven years on active service, was an intimate friend of Mr. Russell, who had retired from the army as a Captain, having served as Secretary to General Sir Henry Clinton in America during the revolutionary war.



Mr. Russell's sister and Sophia Denison, the wife of John Denison, had been friends from childhood.

Through the influence of Mr. Russell and his sister, Mr. and Mrs. Denison were induced to leave England, with their family at that early period and emigrate to the new Colony, at its very first commencement, and sailed with their three sons, George, Thomas and Charles, from Hull, in Yorkshire, on the first day of July 1792, arriving at Kingston in October of that year, it having occupied them three weeks in steady travelling to get from New York to Oswego, such was the wild state of the rear of New York State at that time.

Mr. Denison resided at Kingston with his family, where he built a residence, until the year 1796, and was about to return to England, disheartened by adversities and the inevitable hardships, attending Colonial life, at that early day. He was however, deterred by the entreaties of his old friends, who persuaded him instead, to move up to York, a place just then surveyed, from the forest, for the Capital of Upper Canada, and there permanently settled with his family.

He accordingly came to York (now Toronto) in the autumn of 1796, and resided at "Castle Frank," a log building erected by Governor Simcoe, a short distance up the River Don, when he first visited the locality, as a wilderness, to settle upon a site for the new Capital, and which was the first dwelling built by the white man at the town of York.

At this time the only inhabitants were those mechanics and laborers, who had been sent up by the Government to prepare buildings for the reception of the various departments, and were in charge of Mr. McGill, commissariat officer, these with a few men, of the Queen's Rangers sent to furnish a protection against the Indians, who were found in great numbers around the settlement, all lived in huts or shanties.

Mr. Denison continued to reside at York, where he built a cottage for himself, until about the year 1800, when, having purchased a tract of land comprising lots three and four, on the Humber, and three and five in the rear thereof, in the Township of York, he went there and settled as a farmer.

While residing at York, he lost an infant daughter, but there being at that time, no public burying ground, no churchyard, no church and no clergymen, he was obliged to bury his child in his garden, and after having settled himself on the Humber, he had the child removed to a lovely spot overlooking the valley of the river.

The burial of this child was the commencement of what is now permanently established as "St. John's Cemetery on the Humber," and all members of the family dying afterwards were here interred."

The cottage referred to in this account, appears to have been built on Front Street, near Bay. Help for household work was very

hard to get then as now, and we read that Miss Russel presented Mrs. John Denison with a negro female slave, Amy Pompadour, said to be the last slave ever legally held in Upper Canada. The story is told of Mr. John Denison, that shortly after coming to Kingston, he built a brewery, but soon found that there was no barley grown in the country. I cannot vouch for this story, but do know that the "Niagara Gazette" of April 1793, announces in its first issue, the arrival of the armed sloop "Onondaga" from Kingston, and among the passengers was "J. Denison". In the same issue there is an advertisement calling on the inhabitants to grow barley, and guaranteeing \$1 per bushel in the Fall, also stating "it is the intention to erect a brewery, under the sanction of the Lieut. Governor." This would lead one to believe there was a hankering on the part of our respected ancestor, for the beer of old England, and part of the hardships recorded in the Cemetery history, may have been the absence of good ale.

When the war of 1812 broke out, John Denison was 57 years of age, and no doubt, was very anxious to serve his country, and did as a Captain in his regiment, and also sent his three sons, George, Thomas and Charles, to the front as privates in his own regiment, the "Old York Volunteers," for the name of John Denison appears as a Lieutenant in the first Militia regiment raised in Upper Canada in the year 1798. Charles was promoted after Queenston, and George T. about the same time, to be ensigns, the regiment was the York Militia.

The writer cannot relate any further particulars of Captain John Denison, enough has been told to show the good sterling stuff he was made of, and his sticking to his country in the face of almost incredible hardships, shows the family motto "Perseverando" must have been ever in his mind. He died in October, 1824, aged 69, and his monument may be seen in the family burying ground, which he so thoughtfully set apart about the year 1800.

The Dominion Archivist at Ottawa writes as follows:

#### MEMO re THE DENISON FAMILY

John Denison was a captain in the 3rd York Militia during the war of 1812. He retired from militia on the 11th of July, 1816, and died on the 28th of October, 1824, aged 70. This regiment designation was changed to "2nd Regiment of York Militia," the former 2nd York being called the "1st Gore" (Militia General order, 10th July, 1816).

Charles Denison was made an ensign in the 3rd York on the 25th of December, 1812. He had been a private in Cameron's Company. Was made a prisoner at York, 27th April, 1813.

George Denison, made a supernumerary ensign in the 3rd York Militia on the 8th of April 1813. He had been a sergeant in Capt. John Denison's Company. Had joined Ridout's Company on the



16th of October, 1812. Was made a prisoner at York 27th April, 1813.

Thomas Denison became a supernumerary ensign in the 3rd York, 8th April, 1813. Had been a private in Heward's Company.

I inclose a Regimental Order by Lt. Col. Chewett, commanding 3rd Regiment York Militia, dated York, 5th September, 1812.

I also append an extract from a proclamation of Governor Simcoe; dated 6th April, 1796, relating to the use of the letters U.E.L.

F. J. AUDEL.

March 21, '10.

With Muster Rolls and Pay Lists of the 3rd Regiment of York, 1812.

Regimental Orders by Lieut Colonel Chewett, Commanding 3rd Regiment York Militia.

York, 5th, September, 1812.

In consequence of the Flank Companies of said Regiment now in the Garrison of York under the Command of Major Allan, having been ordered by Major General Scheaffe on the 4th instant to proceed with all possible speed to Fort George. The following officers number of Non Commissioned Officers and Privates detached by their respective Quotas from the Battalion Companies of said Regiment, are hereby directed to compose the following Companies and to do duty in the Garrison until further orders:

1st Captain Denison

Lt. Endicott

Ensn. McArthur

3 Serjeants

42 Rank and file

2nd Captain Ridout

Lt. Kendrick

Ensn. Brooks

3 Serjeants

42 Rank and file

3rd Captain Hamilton

Lieut. Playter

Ensn. Jarvis

3 Serjeants

42 Rank and file

(Signed) W. Chewett,

Lt. Col. 3rd Regt. York Militia.

Major Allan,

3rd Regt. York Militia

etc., etc., etc.

A true copy

W. Chewett, Lt. Col.

3rd Regt. Yk. Militia.

"Whereby it appears by the minutes of the Council of the late Province of Quebec, dated Monday, the 9th day of November, 1789, to have been the desire of His Excellency, Lord Dorchester, the Governor General, to put a mark of honor upon the families who adhered to the Unity of the Empire and joined the Royal Standard in America, before the Treaty of Separation in the year 1783, and for that purpose it was then ordered by His Excellency in Council, that the several Land Boards (should) take course in preserving a registry of the names of all persons falling under the description aforementioned, to the end that their posterity might be discriminated from (the then) future settlers in the parish registers and rolls of the militia of their respective districts and other public remembrances of the Province, as proper objects, by their persevering in the fidelity and conduct so honorable to their ancestors, for distinguished benefits and privileges." But as such registry had not been generally made, and as it is still necessary to ascertain the persons and families who may have distinguished themselves as abovementioned, etc., do hereby direct all persons claiming to be confirmed by deed under seal of the Province of their several possessions, who adhered to the Unity of the Empire, and joined the Royal Standard in America, before the Treaty of Separation in the year 1783, to ascertain the same upon oath before Magistrates in the Michaelmas Quarter Sessions assembled, now next ensuing the date of this Proclamation, that if they neglect to ascertain according to the mode set forth, their claims to receive deeds without fee, they will not be considered as entitled, in this respect to the benefit of having adhered

### GEORGE TAYLOR DENISON

The next member of the family I will try to tell something about, is Capt. John Denison's eldest son, George Taylor, of "Bellevue" Toronto, who was born at Harwich, Essex, England, Dec. 29, 1783, and was only nine years old when his father landed in Canada.

He married on the 18th Dec. 1806, Esther Borden, daughter of Capt. Lippincott, and then only fifteen years of age. At first they resided near the Black creek between Toronto Junction (now ward seven) and Weston, afterwards my grandfather purchased a hundred acres from Major, afterwards Lieut. Col. Littlehales, Bart., and the price was I think, five pounds an acre. This holding was afterwards increased, by purchase of fifty six acres more, and the entire farm was situated between Queen and Bloor on the South and North, and about five chains East of Bathurst, and about five chains West of Spadina. On this property, near the centre, he built "Old Bellevue" about the year 1815, cutting down just enough trees to let the sun in, so dense was the forest.

After being married only six years the war of 1812 broke out, and young George Denison, shouldered his musket, and joined his



company of the West York regiment, and served with distinction, through the war, rising from private to, at the close of the war, Captain in his Regiment. Captain Denison was not present at Queenston when Brock was killed, but he took part in the desperate and almost forlorn defence of York, in April 1813, when a mere handful of regulars, Militia and Indians, disputed the landing of an overwhelming force of Americans, and history records, that G. T. Denison being sent with a party to destroy a frigate in charge of a British naval officer, in the harbor, was captured by the Americans while disputing with this naval gentleman, as to the validity of his orders, and I am happy to say that "red tape" was made a prisoner too, and not paroled until the close of the war. G. T. Denison being exchanged, after six months on parole at home, near York.

Our grandfather narrowly escaped being captured by American Dragoons near St. Catharines, when he was conveying some \$40,000 for the payment of the troops on the Niagara frontier, only the timely warning of a mounted scout, and a fast horse saved him. There is only one other case on record, where a Denison showed the enemy his horse's tail, and that was at the execution of Lount and Matthews in 1838, when Major G. T. Denison turned his horse's tail to the scaffold, unable to bear the sight of the hanging. On that occasion he was present officially in command of his troop, of the Queens Light Dragoons, now the Governor General's Body Guard.

At the battle of Queenston the two brothers of George Denison, were present, Thomas and Charles, both distinguished themselves. One aimed the gun from the battery that sunk in mid stream a scow loaded with American soldiers, drowning them to a man, a sight I am told he never forgot to his dying day. The other brother got a ball through the hat while picking off the sharpshooter who killed General Brock (he pinked him all right).

Soldiering in Canada, tells this story about Thomas, when his brother Major George T. Denison was in command of the "Old Fort Toronto in 1837". During the day a body of armed men was seen coming from the West, and moving in the direction of the Fort. As they were all in plain clothes, and there no uniforms on either side, there was considerable excitement as to whether there would be an attack or not. The ramparts were manned, and all preparations made for an attack, and the approaching body anxiously watched. Suddenly my grandfather said "that man in front looks like my brother Thomas". And so it was, Thomas Denison, who had been an officer in the Militia, and had served through the war, fighting at Queenston and other actions, was living some ten miles West of Toronto, and hearing of the outbreak, had sent around to his neighbors and raised a good sized force of farmers, armed with their own rifles and shot guns and had marched in to aid the cause of his Sovereign.

An amusing addition to this might be added; and my father, the

late, Lieut. Col. R. B. Denison, vouches for it. A rebel piper was met en-route, and he was forced to turn, and play them to the fort. During the periods between Military duties G. T. Denison gave his attention very successfully to farming and looking after his large estates. I would be afraid to say how much land he left behind in the Township of York after his death, but my father used to say he left 556 acres, all within the present limits of the City of Toronto. Col. George T. Denison, was a man of unbounded hospitality, according to all reports, and the dining table at "Bellevue" fairly groaned with good things to eat. He was a staunch Tory, a good Churchman, and although his stable was filled with horses, he marched his family two miles through mud, during the bad roads to St. James Cathedral, on Sunday, except during the last years of his life. He was persuaded once to attend a revival, and hear a celebrated preacher. The great man had hardly got under way, when the Colonel fell fast asleep. This annoyed the preacher, who roared out "Awake old man". The "Old man" awoke and started for the door, some one telling the preacher who he was, "Stop" cried the revivalist "don't go old gentleman." "No thank you" said my grandfather "I have had enough of you". He contributed liberally to the founding of Trinity College in the days when high and low terms were unknown, and altogether was one of the most public spirited men Toronto ever knew, and loyal always to his King and country.

He was married four times, and now sleeps peacefully, in the family burial ground surrounded by the graves of his four wives. The date of his death was 1853 and a handsome monument marks his tomb, in the Cemetery at Weston.

### RICHARD LIPPINCOTT DENISON

The eldest son of Col. George Taylor Denison (Primus) was Richard Lippincott, of "Dovercourt" Dundas Street, Toronto, and was born at Weston, in March 1814. He and George were the first Denisons to attend Upper Canada College, being present on the opening day, and before his marriage lived with his father at the old homestead. He was a man of great muscular strength, and I have heard my father say he could lift as much as any man on the farm and the man into the bargain. In later years shortly before his death, I remember hearing that the Church Warden, called to settle some church business. The warden was young and powerful, and the two men got "warm". "Colonel" exclaimed the excited churchman "your grey hairs save you" "Warden" replied the muscular Colonel "they will not save you," and he threw his opponent out into the middle of the road. No police court proceedings followed.

When Colonel Richard's father resigned from the Command of the Queen's Light Dragoons, to take command of the first West York Battalion, he was promoted from Lieutenant to command the



troop in 1838, when he was only 24. and he held the command during the troublesome times of 37-8 and until 1846, when he retired to accept a Majority in the 4th Battalion, of Toronto, Sedentary Militia, commanded by his father, and shortly after became Lieut. Colonel commanding; a position he filled until his death, in March 1878. Colonel R. L. Denison was very active in all matters pertaining to his native city, and sat for St. Patrick's ward as Alderman, he too was also an active Anglican (as may be supposed from the Churchwarden incident) and built a chapel near "Dovercourt" (his home) for himself and family to worship in.

He was very much interested in everything pertaining to agriculture, and farmed successfully a large tract of land in the West end of the City. He was for a number of years, a member of the old Agricultural and Arts Association, and took a deep interest in live stock especially. Like his father he was a big hearted man, and his hospitality knew no bounds. He was a splendid horseman, and a man of very handsome personal appearance, in fact the writer has heard him called the handsomest man in Toronto. When he died he left a grown up family of eight sons and one daughter.

#### GEORGE TAYLOR DENISON (Secundus)

Col. G. T. Denison's second son, was named after himself, and he was born shortly after Col. Richard, 17th July 1816, near where old "Bellevue" stood, and he too attended Upper Canada College, afterwards studying law, and passing as a Barrister. His Military career began at a very early age. 1837 and to do Col. G. T. Denison's (Secundus) memory justice, I will take the liberty of quoting his record from the Governor General's Body Guard History.

"George Taylor Denison (Rusholme) in 1837 was at the action at Gallows Hill, and in the operations during the Winter of that year in the neighborhood of Brantford, and Village of Scotland, served through the siege of Navy Island. Was appointed Lieutenant 1st November 1838, Gazetted Captain, 23rd of February 1848, Brevet Major 6th of December 1850. Gazetted Lieut. Col. in command of regiment of cavalry composed of four troops, 12th March 1853. In 1856 he organized a field battery in connection with the mounted force (now 9th Field Battery) and subsequently he organized, and was given the command temporarily, of the second Battalion now the "Queens Own" until he could recommend an officer to be placed in command of it. Gazetted Colonel, 10th October 1860, and appointed Commandant of the 5th and 10th Military Districts. During the Fenian Raid, of 1866, he commanded the Toronto Militia Garrison, comprising several thousand men, and was for many years, before his death, the senior Volunteer Officer in Ontario, being the only full Colonel in it."

It is hardly necessary to add anything to a record such as the

above, it speaks for itself, and is one that the family are, and should be proud of. When a boy I was very fond of walking across the fields from "Bellevue" with my father to visit "Uncle George" at "Rusholme" and was sure to be welcomed with the old fashioned grace and courtesy, which the "Colonel" was noted for, which would make even a shy boy feel at home. I have never forgotten the kind words of counsel and advice, he gave me when leaving home, for Montreal in 1872. I sometimes think the rising generation, make a mistake in not listening more to what their more experienced relatives say to them. This is a digression Colonel G. T. Denison was a very smart active man, all his life, with a splendid seat on horse back, and military carriage. He was also an expert skater, and my father relates that they used to be annoyed when driving on the Bay, by toughs snow-balling them, and then skating safely away. One day his brother fastened on his skates, and hid a heavy black snake whip in the sleigh. The snow-balling began, when out jumped Uncle George, and created consternation among the boys, as the fleetest of them, were unable to escape the heavy whip, which the unexpected skater plied with much vigor.

Col. G. T. Denison died in the summer of 1873, and was buried with Military honors suitable to his rank as full Colonel, in St. John's Cemetery, on the Humber, and the sombre woods rang with the fire of big guns as well as small arms when the last volleys were fired.

### ROBERT BRITTAIN DENISON

The next and youngest son of Gen. T. Denison, (Primus), was my father, Lieut. Col. Robt. Brittain Denison, who was born at "Bellevue", Toronto, 23rd April, 1821, and I will follow the same course as I did with his second brother and copy his Military record from the same source.

"Robert Brittain Denison, appointed Cornet 1843, gazetted Cornet, 11th February, 1846, gazetted Lieutenant, 5th May, 1848, gazetted Captain 6th December, 1850. When the Act of 1855 was passed, relating to the active Militia, he took in the troop under the provisions of it, and was on the 27th of December, 1855, gazetted Captain. On the 13th November, 1856, appointed to command the Foot Artillery Company; 2nd of April, 1857, gazetted Brevet Major in Foot Artillery. This corps afterwards became No. 4 Company, "Queen's Own." Appointed to the command of the Toronto Field Battery, 4th of December, 1857. Gazetted Captain of the Trinity College Company, now No. 8 Company "Queen's Own," 3rd June, 1861. Appointed Brigade Major of the 10th Military District, 28th November, 1862. Lieut. Colonel 2nd February, 1866. During the Fenian Raid, he was, on the 2nd of June, sent to Clifton in command of a Battalion of thirteen companies, to hold the Suspension Bridge



and to guard that portion of the Niagara frontier. Appointed Deputy Adjutant-General of Military District No. 2, 1st January, 1881. Retired 1st July, 1886."

Col. R. B. Denion also was educated at Upper Canada College, and after leaving school assisted his father on the farm; he also was a land valuator for the Toronto University, driving over a large part of Ontario. After his father's death in 1853, he inherited the home farm "Bellevue" but did not move to the homestead till 1865.

In 1858 he built, at his own expense, St. Stephen's Church, at the corner of College and Bellevue Avenue, then in the open fields, like his predecessors, in the family he was a loyal churchman, and well does the writer remember being marched to church in all weathers, with all the rest of my brothers and sisters, very often we composed the entire congregation. Now that church boasts 1000 Communicants.

During the Fenian excitement of 1866, the guard at the armouries was inspected at 8 p.m. and I can hear yet the clank of my father's spurs leaving the North door before the sermon. Unkind people used to say, "Colonel Denison left the church before the sermon because he disapproved of the Incumbent's doctrine." My father had two at least exciting experiences, one happened when a young man, living at "Bellevue," he was awakened at night by a noise in a big hall and grabbing his heavy cavalry sabre sallied forth, to be met by a burglar with a pistol presented ready to fire, my father made a cut from the top of the stairs (they were very short) and the intruder fired, the ball passing through the shirt my father was wearing, and lodging in an old fashioned clock case, where it still is. The would-be murderer escaped by the front door which he conveniently left open.

The other experience was amusing. A friend of my father's considered himself insulted by some remarks made at a Public meeting, and with the assistance of three friends and a loaded whip, decided to thrash the Major, (he was that then) in his house on Denison Avenue, accordingly they drove there in the morning, just as family prayers were concluded. The Major demurred about going to the door at first, on account of the formidable array, so the leader began breaking the hall windows. That did the trick, so my father, armed only with his fists and good pugilistic training, opened the door and the fray began. The fight was long and bloody (the blood being with the attackers). The leader's nose was broken, but things looked ominous for my father, until the Iris' servant girl joined the fracas with a tin dipper (block tin) which created such a diversion that the fight soon ended.

The scrappers belonged to a prominent family, and the father of the leader called shortly after, to say his son had been disfigured for life and sufficiently punished, and was prepared

to apologize if there would be no prosecution. This was done and the two combatants became fast friends.

"Soldiering in Canada" describes another fight (a sham fight) in which my father had great odds against him, but thanks to his own pluck and the very timely assistance willingly rendered by his nephew Col. G. T. Denison Jr., he pulled through successfully. This was at the big camp at Niagara, in June 1872, when nearly 7,000 men were under canvas, and well do I remember the excitement and suspense, we boys were in till the news arrived, that Col. Denison had won. In 1881 my father was appointed Deputy-Adjuant-General commanding Military District No. 2, including the Toronto, and Hamilton regiments and all the rural Battalions in the seventeen counties adjoining, a matter of about 7,000 men. In those days, the District staff consisted of only a D. A. G. a Brigade Major, a paymaster, and one clerk, so a staff officer's job, was not altogether a sinecure. Of course at the annual Niagara camp these were augmented.

Lieut. Colonel R. B. Denison retired in 1886 being two years over the age limit, and his last official act was to inspect his old corps the Governor General's Body Guard. He died in August, 1900, at the age of 79, and was buried with his family at Weston. Although it is now nearly ten years since his death, his memory is still fresh among the officers and men of his old District, so many officers from the rural parts had passed through the Military schools of instruction presided over by the District staff, that wherever I have been, I have been reminded of his many jokes and stories, of which he had an inexhaustible fund. Even in far away Vancouver Island and the Okanagan Valley, B. C., where I had the pleasure of spending nearly a year, I ran up against men who had "soldiered" as they put it, with the old "Colonel", and had nothing, but kind words to say of him.

### EDWIN P. DENISON

There were several decendants of Thomas Denison, the second son, of Capt. John Denison, who settled at Weston, but I have before me the Military record of only one; namely Capt. Edwin P. Denison, of the well known and often mentioned Corps the "Governor General's Body Guard," the senior cavalry regiment in the Militia service of the Dominion Canada.

"Edwin P. Denison, appointed Lieutenant and Adjutant 28th of August, 1860, gazetted Lieutenant, 25th August, 1865, gazetted Brevet Captain 7th June 1867, Captain 18th August, 1868\* retired retaining his rank 1st of March, 1872. Served during Fenian Raid of 1866 on the Niagara Frontier." Capt. Denison died a few years ago at his home, Davenport Road, near Toronto

While referring to the above mentioned regiment, I may say for the benefit of the rising generation, that it used to be called "Deni-



son's Cavalry," and that Col. G T. Denison mentions that nineteen of the horses ridden in Lord Elgin's escort May 1850, were owned by his grandfather or his sons.

This finishes the history of the first generation of the pioneer Denison's now all dead, and before touching on those still with us, I would like to quote from an independent authority, regarding the three brothers, and take the following from "Old Boys Recollection," "The College Times," "Christmas 1902." "There was a trio of old boys, whom I knew from my very earliest days, the three brothers Richard, George and Robert Denison, sons of Lieut. Col. George Taylor Denison, of Bellevue, Toronto, I was not at U. C. C. with any one of these three, yet I knew them all well. The first named was famous for his great personal strength and love of field sports, he was in his day an excellent cricketer, a splendid shot, and an accomplished horseman. When I first remember him, he lived in a roughcast cottage, prettily situated in the woods, on Dundas Street, on the site where now stands Wesley Methodist Church. His home was one where most lavish hospitality prevailed; where visitors were always welcomed, and even had they not wished it, where it was impossible for them not to feel at home.

George Denison, when first I knew him, resided where some of his descendants do now, at "Rusholme", also on Dundas Street. He, like his eldest brother, was also a splendid horseman, fond of riding and driving, and outdoor exercise. He was one of the most enthusiastic volunteer soldiers, I ever knew, and gave not only years of his time, but spent his money freely, in keeping the martial spirit alive in Toronto and its neighborhood.

Robert Denison the youngest of these three brothers, only answered the final "Roll Call" two years ago, he had reached a great age, and left behind him a host of pleasant memories. For nearly forty years, he was connected with the Canadian Militia, and to the day of his death retained his love for soldiering and all that appertains thereto. He was one of the very few of our old time Militia officers, who knew how to handle in the field the three arms of the service, Cavalry, Artillery and Infantry. He could manoeuvre a Squadron of Cavalry, as easily as he could direct the drill of a battery of Artillery, and Infantry drill as used to be said, by aspirants, at Stanley Barracks, for certificate of qualification as officers in the Militia, whatever "Bob" for he was familiarly termed "did not know was not worth learning."

I knew as a boy his eldest son Shirley; he was also at U. C. C., but not in my time. He, like his father was also in the Militia, if my memory does not play me false in the G. G. B. G. Shirley Denison was of a gentle mould, possessed of high sense of honor and of blameless integrity. Those who remember him do so, with nothing but affection for his memory in their minds

Other members of the Denison family, whom I knew were also old boys, were William, a son of Richard Denison and Fred and Egerton, I remember only as boys, and who were sons of George Denison, of "Rusholme". William died many years ago, in the North West and Fred long years since, shortly after his return from the Soudan. Fred Denison's career as a soldier and member of Parliament, for one of the Divisions, of Toronto, is too well known to require any description here. Though still a comparatively young man when he died, he had made a record of work well and faithfully performed, which the present generation of U. C. C. pupils will do well to study and seek to emulate."

CHAS. L. DENISON, J. P.

Colonel G. T. Denison, (Primus), had a son by a second marriage, still living, Charles L. Denison, Dufferin St., Toronto. He served in the G. G. B. G. from 8th October, 1858, to 25th August, 1865, retiring as a Lieutenant. He was a great lover of horses and a splendid hand at managing and breeding them. He represented St. Patricks Ward, in the City Council as an Alderman. I am told he was a wonderfully handy man with the "Gloves" a very important accomplishment in the early days of Toronto. For some years "uncle Charlie" has been confined to the house, as the result of an unfortunate accident, on the Dufferin race track, when he nearly lost his life. He too, had all the hospitable traits of his father and elder brothers and it was always a great pleasure to visit at his home in what used to be "Brocton".

It would make this attempt at a history entirely too long if I were to continue to enumerate the virtues of all the living members, I am convinced, they all have them, but it would be impossible for so large a family, all to be prominent in Military, or Political matters, even one of our cousins, the Archdeacon's sister married plain Thomas Smith, so I will only mention a few who were fortunate enough to distinguish themselves in the world, and I trust the present generation will emulate them.

R. L. DENISON, (Secundus)

Colonel Richard Denison's eldest son, also R. L. Denison, was born about 1838, and educated at Upper Canada College, after leaving school he assisted his father on the home farm at "Dovercourt", and after his marriage took up farming at York Mills, and in Oxford County, afterward returning to Toronto, where he for a number of years was connected with the Agriculture and Arts Association leaving them when that branch was merged in the Department of Agriculture. He was commanding officer of the Toronto Field Battery, for a number of years, from 12th August, 1858, to 12th January, 1866, retiring with the rank of Major. In 1895 Major



Richard L. Denison, moved with his family to the Township of North Grimsby, where he died, after a lingering illness born with uncomplaining fortitude in October 1906.

### WILLIAM DENISON

William another brother of R. L. Denison, was a railroad contractor, on a large scale, and was engaged in several important contracts.

One of the most important was in connection with the building of the old narrow guage, Toronto, Grey & Bruce railway, now the Standard Guage C. P. R., from Toronto to Owen Sound. While attending to this work he resided in Orangeville, Dufferin County, and the writer has often seen "Dovercourt" as it was called, after his fathers house in Toronto.

William afterwards moved to Winnipeg with his family, and died there several years ago.

### JOHN GEORGE DENISON

John George, another of the same family, lived in a very picturesque cottage, in the long winding lane leading to "Dovercourt" and followed farming for some years on his father's property. He was also connected with the Toronto Field Battery. At present I understand, he is living in British Columbia.

### EDWIN DENISON

Another brother, Edwin, spent part of his life in Toronto, being employed by a large wholesale Dry Goods House, afterwards removing to Montreal and occupying an important position, with one of the big Dry Goods firms there. Subsequently going into business in Welland County, when the new canal was under construction. After being in business there for several years, he moved to Minnedosa, Man., and engaged there in mercantile pursuits till his appointment as Manager of the Union Bank of Canada, which appointment he still holds.

### HERBERT DENISON

Herbert Denison also belongs to this large family, and he also spent a good many years in Toronto, until just previous to 1885, when he got the North West fever and moved to Alberta to go into ranching, but after a few years moved to Vernon, B. C., purchasing a part of the far famed Coldstream Ranch, formerly owned by Lord Aberdeen, the pioneer of the Okanagan Valley, B. C.

### ARTHUR R. DENISON

Another son, Arthur R., is carrying on a large business as an architect, and is making a name for himself in Toronto. He used

to be an enthusiastic member of "The Queen's Own" till pressure of other important public matters took his attention. He also sat in the City Council as an Alderman.

### ALFRED DENISON

Alfred, an older brother, also served in the "Queen's Own," and was present at "Ridgeway." Albert Denison, the youngest brother, served with the G. G. B. G. during the North West Rebellion of 1885.

There was also one sister, Mrs Hugh Thompson, afterwards Mrs Armstrong, of Lloydtown, Ont.

It would be impossible for me to do justice to the sons of Col. G. T. Denison, "Rusholme" nearly all their records are before the public, but I cannot do an injustice if I merely quote, and I want the present generation to learn something about their second cousins.

### GEORGE TAYLOR DENISON (Tertius)

The most prominent of them all, up to date, is the eldest Col. George Taylor Denison (Tertius), and I would strongly advise anyone who reads this, to get the books "Soldiering in Canada" and "Imperial Unity," (most of the public libraries have the first anyway) and there read about the Colonel. He was born at "Bellevue," Toronto, in the year 1839, and attended Upper Canada College and Trinity College. The following is his remarkable Military record taken from the history of the G. G. B. Guard: "George Taylor Denison (Heydon Villa), appointed Cornet 15th September, 1854, (only 15), gazetted Lieutenant 20th March, 1856; given command of the troop temporarily as Lieutenant 15th January, 1857, gazetted Captain 22nd April 1857, Brevet-Major 22nd April 1862; served through the Fenian Raid of 1866, in Fort Erie, and in command of the Cavalry on the Niagara Frontier; Brevet Lieut. Colonel, 13th September, 1866. Having resigned, his name was placed on the retired list to date from 31st of July, 1868, resignation cancelled 5th May, 1876; appointed Major commanding the squadron from retired list May 5, 1876; commanded during the North West Rebellion, 1885. Appointed Lieutenant Colonel, commanding the regiment 31st May, 1889; placed on reserve of officers 8th June, 1898. Honorary Lieutenant Colonel of Regiment, 1st February, 1899. Colonel 1907.

It will be seen by this that the Colonel was made a Captain of Dragoons, when a little over seventeen years of age, and a Brevet Lieut. Col. at 27, even to a civillian this seems astonishing, but the record cannot lie. Equally astonishing was the winning of the Czar of Russia's prize in 1877, for the best Treatise on Cavalry. He had the officers of all the world against him, at the least the competition was open to all Cavalry Officers of the Regular and Militia services, who felt competent to attempt it.

In addition to Military duties the Colonel took an active part in



political matters, especially in the contest after the Pacific Scandal 1872-3, and later. He was splendid at repartee on the public platform, and I remember both sides telling me years after it happened, when I was living in old Dunnville, how a Tory interrupter was squelched. Colonel Denison began his speech "Men of Dunnville" up jumped the interrupter "Gentlemen of Dunnville, please," G. T. Denison paused and then said "I beg your pardon gentlemen," of Dunnville, "thank God we are all men in Toronto." The speech was not disturbed again, and the old residents still laugh at poor old Crawford's discomfiture. I also remember when living in Orangeville 1888-9-90, the so-called Commercial Union Movement was at its height, and Elgin Myers, Crown Attorney, was leading it. We loyal men, who attended the meetings, for the purpose of hissing the thing down, had a hard time, for the instant any sign of dissent was made, a special constable, sworn in by the Crown Attorney, would pounce down upon us.

There was a strong desire that Col. Denison, should reply, and an invitation was sent. The laconic answer came back "I don't go gunning for humming birds". Poor Myer, deserted by his one time friends, Goldwin Smith, Cox, etc., fired by the Government from his job, afterwards met a lonely death at the "Soo", where he tried to make a fresh start in life. I am digressing but it really was a "humming bird".

Colonel Denison's record on the Bench, as Police Magistrate for Toronto, for more than thirty years is too well known for lengthy comment. People of all sorts and kinds, all over the Province discuss his decisions, and the rural J. P's are always referring to Toronto Police Court procedure. The magistrate's absolute impartialty, and his indifference to public opinion, are well known, also his contempt of red tape, and quibbles, or silly law points. Not long ago I was reading an English book on Canada (J. Foster Fraser's I think), and came upon an incident, he reported as happening in the Toronto Police Court. The author says "On visiting the Court I was very politely invited to a seat near the Magistrate, and was amazed at the celerity with which case after case was disposed of. "I said Colonel, this is all very well, but what do you do when a point of law comes up? The answer was "This is not a Court of Law, but of Justice".

When the appointment was first made, much "kicking" was done by Aldermen and others, with a "pull", because there old time influence, in Police circles was of no avail, and attempts made to influence the Government against the magistrate, but all with no effect, and now, no one would ever think of any other occupant of the Bench, than the present one. The Ontario Government have shown their appreciation by largely increasing the salary, and giving two assistants. An attempt was made, not long ago, to show that

fees were wrongly collected by the P. M's, but on a thorough investigation being made, it was found as far as Colonel Denison was concerned, to be utterly without foundation.

I would not mention this, were it not for the fact that in 1910, an honest man in public life is becoming rare.

I like, if possible, in this account, to add independent testimony where it is available, and cannot finish, this all too incomplete description of Col. G. T. Denison, without quoting from that great soldier; Field Marshall Lord Wolseley. In his book "The Story of a Soldier's Life" he says:—

"One of the ablest, and professionally one of the best read officers, I ever knew, is Col. George Denison, of Toronto, who for many years commanded the Governor General of Canada's Body Guard. The descendant of many generations of gallant soldiers, who have during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, fought for the British Crown in Canada, he would have been a military leader of note, in any army he joined. It is much to be regretted he did not adopt the army as a profession. Had he done so, he must have risen to eminence. He gained the prize offered by the Emperor of Russia, for the best essay on Cavalry, which was a great distinction, as it was open to the officers of all nations. During the annoyance caused to Canada, by the Fenians, I came to know him well. With the body Guard he patrolled the left bank of the Niagara River above the Falls, while the excitement lasted, they were just the corps for that work, and he was just the man to command them effectively. I realized at the time that no similar number of regular cavalry could have done that duty as effectively; but he was a man in a thousand and a born cavalry leader.

Of Canadian officers he says: "No commander could desire to have better soldiers, than those of the two Canadian Militia battalions, who constituted the bulk of the force, I then had with me. Our young officers of the regular army are too apt to depend upon regulations, and are apt to dwarf their natural military instincts in position, where the Canadian officer would act according to the common sense that is within him."

Dr. G. Sterling Ryerson, of Toronto, spoke of Colonel Denison in connection with the "Imperial Idea", from a public platform in January 1906, as follows: Dr Ryerson in dismissing the meeting, also spoke of Col Denison's efforts in the cause of the Imperial advancement. Col. Denison had but lately refused high honors on the ground that he had worked only for duty's sake and not for the hope of reward. The day would come when Canadians without distinction of party, would give Col. Denison a high place in the regard of the nation."

Another brother of Col. Geo. T. Denison, was Lieutenant-Colonel Fred C. Denison, C. M. G., M. P. West Toronto, whose military



record is as follows: "In January 1865 joined as Lieutenant the 2nd Administrative Battalion, at Niagara; appointed Cornet 25th August, 1865; served during the Fenian Raid 1866, on the Niagara frontier; Gazetted Brevet Lieutenant, 6th December, 1867; Lieutenant 18th August, 1868; served on the Staff in the Red River Expedition, of 1870, as Orderly officer to Major General Sir Garnet Wolseley; Gazetted Captain, 1st March, 1876; Gazetted Major, 9th November, 1876; Brevet Lieut-Colonel, 9th September, 1884; commanded the Nile Voyageurs in Egypt, 1884-1885; decorated by H. M. Queen Victoria, as Companion of the Order of S'Michael and S'George in 1885; Member of Parliament, for West Toronto, from 1887 until his death 15th April, 1896."

Colonel Fred Denison was one of the most popular Members in the Dominion House, and a favorite with everybody. Although elected as a Conservative, he was very independent in his opinions and fearless in expressing them. He refused always the usual railroad pass given members, for fear it might influence his railroad opinions. So popular was he with his constituents, that they elected him by the largest majority given any candidate in 1891. Colonel Fred's health was seriously affected by the Campaign in Egypt 84-5, and his life at one time was in jeopardy. This illness no doubt hastened his end in 1896.

Rear Admiral John Denison' was also a son of Col. Geo. T. Denison, Sen., and about all the writer can remember personally about him, was saying good bye to him in 1866, when he left to join the Royal Navy at the age of 13. When living in Victoria B. C. 1907, I often heard John spoken of as "Gentleman John" and on enquiry was told the reason of this nickname, was the fact he always treated everyone, sailors, civilians, or officers, with marked politeness. I heard the same trait commented upon by a deserter from one of his ships, who could not praise enough his Commander. Strange to say I met a Chaplain of the Navy in the Okanagan Valley, B. C., who also knew our distinguished cousin and I received much hospitality at his hands in consequence.

If the "Busy Man's" Magazine will forgive me, I will copy an article on Rear Admiral Denison, which appeared in March, 1908, entitled "From Cadet to Rear Admiral".

"The first Torontonian to fly his flag as Rear Admiral in the Royal Navy, is John Denison. This is indeed a great honor and of which Canadians generally should feel proud.

Many residents of the Queen City, more particularly those living here in the fifties and sixties will remember John Denison as a bright, merry lad. The boy of those days has now developed into a commanding figure in the Navy of his Majesty. He entered as a Cadet on the Britannia, at Dartmouth, in 1866. Just forty years later he had risen to the rank of Rear Admiral.

In company with his wife and two daughters, Admiral Denison paid a visit to Canada last summer. He is one of the most courtly and considerate of men. Of engaging manner and possessing a quiet jovial manner, he at once finds a warm place in the hearts of all who come in contact with him, either in a social way, or in the discharge of his official duties. In disposition he is extremely modest. He has a keen sense of humor and can relate a good story in capital style. His naval career is full of interest and incident. He has traveled in all parts of the world and sailed many seas.

Rear Admiral John Denison is a son of the late Col. George T. Denison, of "Rusholme" Toronto, and a brother of Col. George T. Denison, Police Magistrate, of Toronto. The late Lieut.-Col. Fred C. Denison, Lieut.-Col. Septimus Denison, and Lieut.-Col. Clarence Denison, are also brothers. Rear Admiral Denison was born at "Rusholme" Toronto, on May 25, 1853, and entered the Royal Navy as Cadet on the *Britannia*, at Dartmouth, at the age of thirteen. For some time he saw service among the South Sea Islands and was there at the time Commodore Goodenough was killed in 1875. For some years he was in the fleet in the Chinese waters, commanding *H. M. S. Firebrand*, which wintered several winters at Tientsin near Peking. He was Commander on *H. M. S. Anson*, when *H. M. S. Howe*, was raised at Ferroll, in Spain, the *Anson* being a ship engaged principally in the saving of the *Howe*. He was in the fleet of which *H. M. S. Captain* was one, when the *Captain* capsized and sank with nearly all on board. Captain Denison was Commander of the Royal Yacht *Victoria* and *Albert* during the years 1893, 1894 and 1895. While holding this position he went with the Duke of Connaught, who was representing the Queen, to St. Petersburg to attend the coronation of the Czar, and the Duke took the Captain with him to Moscow, where the festivities and function were witnessed. On the return voyage, Captain Denison accompanied the Duke to Stockholm, where they were entertained by the Late King of Sweden. For two years Captain Denison commanded *H. M. S. Melpomene* in the Persian Gulf. Afterwards he commanded *H. M. S. Niobe*, and with the *Diadem* they formed the escort of *H. R. H. the Prince of Wales*, on his visit to Australia, as far as Gibraltar. When the Prince was coming to Canada on his return, the *Niobe* and *Diadem* met him at Cape Verde Islands and escorted the *Ophir* to Quebec; and from Halifax back to England. In 1903-4 he commanded the battleship *Montague* in the Mediterranean fleet, and in 1905-6 held the position of Superintendent at the Royal Dockyard at Pembroke, until his appointment as Rear Admiral on September 13, 1906. In 1908 he commanded the Devonport Division of the Home Fleet.

In 1878 Rear Admiral Denison was married to Miss Florence Ledgard, of Ellar Close, Roundhay, Yorkshire, and has a family of two sons and two daughters. His sons are John L. Denison, Barris-



ter, of London, England, and Bertram N. Denison, Lieutenant in the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, now stationed at Aldershot.

On December 3, last Rear Admiral Denison hoisted his flag on his old ship the Leviathan as Commander of the Devonport Division of the Home Fleet, in which there are about twenty ships. He has also been made President of the Devonport War College. He is the first Torontonion to fly his flag as Rear Admiral in the Royal Navy.

The great grandfather of Rear Admiral Denison when he came to Canada from Yorkshire, settled at Kingston. When about to return to Yorkshire he proceeded to the capital, then Niagara-on-the-Lake to say good bye to Governor Simcoe. The latter was disappointed at the thought of Captain Denison going back to the Old Country and told him he intended to establish a new capital across the lake. He asked him to come there and not to leave the country. Captain Denison remarked "What are you going to call the new capital?" To which the governor replied "we intend to call it Dublin." "If you call it York, I will stay" observed the Captain. His Excellency agreed to this proposition, so the name of the new capital was changed to York. In an old official document Toronto was called "Dublin".

The town was named York, in honor it was said of the Duke of York, then Commander in Chief. Whether as a joke or to be flimsy, the township was called York, the county York, the two rivers after the two Yorkshire rivers, the Humber and the Don, while four townships near, were called Whitby, Scarboro, Pickering and Whitechurch, all Yorkshire names. For several generations the Denison family were the largest land owners in Toronto and today are among the largest real estate holders in the city.

### CLARENCE A. DENISON

Lieut.-Col. Clarence A. Denison, another of the same family also has a distinguished military record, which like the last brother is still piling up, for he at present commands the 1st Cavalry Brigade in No. 2 District, Toronto. The record so far is as follows:

Clarence A. Denison appointed Ensign West Toronto Militia, 1869, Cornet, May 10, 1872; Lieutenant, May 5, 1876; Captain, March 9; 1883; Brevet Major, 1893; Lieut.-Colonel June 11, 1889. Served in U. C. C. C., Q. O. R. during the Fenian Raid, 1866; also during North West Rebellion, 1885.

In civil life Colonel Clarence is Head Office Accountant of the Standard Bank of Canada, Toronto.

There was only one civilian in this family, Henry T. Denison. I have seen the family group picture in which all wore the King's (Queen's then) uniform, except the above. He has been engaged in various business pursuits, part of the time away from Canada. If I

am rightly informed, at present he has taken up agriculture in the North West.

I cannot give Lieut.-Colonel Septimus Denison's, (another brother) military record with any degree of exactness as it must come from memory. He entered the Royal Military College, at Kingston, after leaving Upper Canada College, and afterwards he joined the English South Staffordshire Militia, and rose rapidly to the rank of Major. He was engaged in financial business with a relative in Toronto for a few years, and during that time sat in the City Council as Alderman.

Shortly afterwards joining the Permanent force, and working up till he is now a Lieut.-Colonel, a C. M. G., and Chief of Staff for Western Ontario. When the Boer War broke out in 1899, he went with the first contingent as Quarter Master of the regiment, taking part in the affair at Sunnyside. Shortly after that engagement, Colonel (then Major) Septimus, received an appointment on Lord Roberts' personal staff as A. D. C., being present at the Paardeberg victory, and I do not know how many other skirmishes and engagements. At the close of the war he was made a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George, and also got his Brevet-Majority in his own regiment the Royal Canadians.

Colonel Denison was said to have been the only "gentleman" on Lord Roberts' staff, the rest all being connected with the Nobility. He reports having all he could do to keep "Bobs" in sight, when that gentleman took it into his head to have a gallop, but "Lady Betty", his Canadian mare generally kept closer than the other horses of the Staff. In 1901 when the Prince of Wales visited Canada, Col. Septimus had the honor of being on his Staff also, and travelled all through the Dominion with him. The Colonel served on Lord Roberts' staff at Quebec in 1908, (the Tercentenary year). He commanded the detachment of the Royal Canadians and Dragoons who dispersed the street car rioters at Hamilton, in 1906, after they had defied the police for days. Said to have been the neatest and quickest piece of work of its kind ever done in Canada. Lieut.-Col. S. A. Denison, C. M. G., has passed all the necessary military examinations (some 13 I think) in England, for the highest ranks in our service and now is second in command of Western Ontario, as Chief of Staff, with Head Quarters at Toronto. Every one whom I have met, who ever served under the C. S. O., speak in the highest terms of him as an Officer and a gentleman; privates as well as Officers.

The youngest brother of this branch of the family was Egerton, he too passed through the Royal Military College, and afterwards became a Captain in the South Staffordshire Militia, serving in 1884-5 in the Nile expedition, with his brother Col. Fred C. Denison, C. M. G., M. P. He afterwards obtained a position on the Gold Coast,



was invalided home, and died on the S. S. Vancouver in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The remains were brought home however, and buried in the family cemetery.

There are two daughters in this family, Hettie B. and Lilla, the wife of Lieut.-Col. Delamere, R. O., late commanding officer of the Queen's Own Rifles.

I now come to the family of Lieut.-Col. R. B. Denison, D. A. G. "Bellevue" Toronto, and it will not take very long to relate their military or other glories.

George Shirley the eldest, was born on Denison Avenue, 17th May, 1846. He nearly came to a premature end, for when a baby he was asleep in a big old fashioned curtained bed, when it took fire from a candle, and was burning briskly, when fortunately a sword belonging to his father, which was on top of the curtains, fell, and alarmed the house, the fire being put out with difficulty. At the age of fifteen and a half Shirley joined the G. G. B. C., as a Cornet remaining in the troop till August, 1865, when he left Toronto to take a position with Messrs. Winn & Holland, Montreal. In 1866 he again joined the Militia, serving with the Montreal Volunteers during the Fenian Raid.

Shirley Denison was intended for the Regular Army and in 64-5 was all ready to leave for England for the purpose of taking a Commission, but he was persuaded to abandon the idea, and remained with Winn and Holland until his death in April, 1876. For some years before his death he was an indefatigable church worker, in connection with St. George's church, Montreal, and was instrumental in founding two churches in the suburbs. He was also Vice-President of the Church of England Temperance Society, and was never tired of trying to help "poor devils" to their feet, who had given way to drink. The kind remarks of Archdeacon Denison about his brother Lord Ossington, would apply to Shirley Denison, in his family relations to all his brothers and sisters.

The writer is the next eldest boy and was born at the cottage near old Bellevue in 1858. Left school when fourteen and entered the office S. H. May & Co., wholesale paints, oils, etc., Montreal, (72), left them (76), after my brother Shirley's death, and returned to Toronto. Entered the Bank of Commerce (77), and remained with them till 1894; retiring to go into fruit growing at Grimsby, worked that till 1900. Then sold out to go into Private Banking at Niagara, which lasted till 1904, when after being blown up by Yankee burglars and losing most of my small capital, I abandoned the business to the Sovereign Bank. Since then have handled all sorts of jobs, in all parts of the country; Victoria, B. C., Okanagan Valley, Edmonton, Ala; and many other places too numerous to mention Robert Evelyn Denison's, military experience is limited to school drill under old Col. Goodwin, and doing pot hooks in the Brigade office on

Front St. (in 65 it must have been) being considered too delicate to go to school. I forgot in 99, I made a frantic effort to get to the front in Boer times, but was scorned on account of being married and having no military experience.

Unless this German war transpires, I am afraid the author of these remarks will have a very peaceful looking tombstone in the old burying ground among his warrior ancestors.

Clement the next brother was born in the same house on Denison Avenue, on January 18 1861. After leaving school he entered the Wholesale House of John Macdonald & Co., Toronto. and was fast becoming a very useful man to the firm when his career was suddenly cut short by his death in 1888. Clement Denison seems to have been a great favorite with all who knew him. He had an unlimited fund of humour, and inherited his father's knack of telling a good story. He was very fond of outdoor exercises; boating, swimming and tennis, at the latter was especially proficient, and was one of the foremost players in the West End Tennis Club at the time of his sudden death from heart disease, which happened 20th May, 1888.

The next son of Col. R. B. Denison, James Beverley, died when very young, and the son following him is Reginald, also born in the "Cottage" (so called, but quite a big house), at the head of Denison Avenue. After finishing his school days he entered the Standard Bank of Canada, and has risen step by step until he occupies the position of Manager of the Parkdale branch. Like his brother Clement, he is devoted to outdoor exercise; rowing, sailing, tennis, etc., at the latter game he is hard to beat and has "trimmed" the writer many a time. He has a keen sense of humour and his home is one of the jolliest I ever entered, and this is the opinion of others besides relatives. He may perhaps see this so I will write no more, for fear of arousing his wrath, except to add that I never before regretted our near relationship, which prevents me from testifying as to his great kindness of heart, and exceptional nobility of disposition.

The baby of the family, Francis Napier, was born at old "Bellevue" April 19, 1866, and was educated at Upper Canada College and the Model Schools for Ontario. Unusual pains were taken with his education to fit him for a professional career, and after leaving college he took a course in Electricity at Lynn, Mass. After inventing and experimenting in various ways he entered The Toronto Observatory, now Meteorological Office, and was transferred to Victoria B. C., on the opening of a station there by the Department. After the great San Francisco earthquake, Napier delivered a lecture on earthquakes in Victoria, which was very highly spoken of. He is a member of the British Scientific Association and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. He was also at one time Vice-President of the Canadian Club in Victoria B. C.

There were four daughters in this branch, Ellen Louise, Mary, Laura Kate (Mrs. Browne) all dead, and Edith Minnie still living in Toronto.

It would be impossible to take up the present generation of Denison's, but I know a little about the three eldest grandsons of Colonels Richard, George and Robert, and here it is. Frank Turguand, eldest living son of the late Major R. L. Denison, Jr., was born near "Dovercourt," Toronto, educated first at the nearby schools and afterwards at Ridley College, S' Catharines. He has followed farming most of his life, except about a year and a half, when he was with the Halifax Battalion, of the Royal Canadian Regiment, at the time when it was expected they would be ordered for active service in South Africa. He has also served with his local corps the 2nd Dragoons, and expects when time permits to take a Commission in that Regiment. Frank Denison can ride and shoot well, and inherits his grandfather's largeness of heart and unlimited hospitality. He, too, possesses to a large extent, the family sense of humour, and altogether is a jolly good fellow, and a splendid neighbor. Frank has a number of family relics including the Lippincott Bible, a picture of Esther Bordon Lippincott (his great grandmother) and Col. G. T. Denison's Sen., dining table; (the one that groaned) I was surprised to find the legs not bowed. Frank Denison resides with his mother on his farm near Grimsby.

George Taylor Denison, Jr., entered the Governor General's Body Guard, as a Provisional, 2nd Lieutenant, in August, 1889; 2nd Lieutenant, December, 1889; Lieutenant, January 30, 1891; Captain, June 13, 1896; Major, July 10, 1901. At present Brigade Major 1st Cavalry, Brigade Major Geo. T. Denison like his father and grandfather, is a Barrister by profession.

John Shirley Denison the eldest son of Geo. Shirley Denison, was born in Montreal, but came with his mother to Toronto, in 1876, after his father's death. After leaving Upper Canada College, he studied law with the firm of Foy & Kelly, passing his final examinations as a Barrister, before attaining his majority. After practising for some years with Foy & Kelly, he formed a partnership with Mr. A. McMurchy, under the name of McMurchy & Denison. In February, 1910, he was appointed by the Law Society, a Lecturer on Real Property. Like his father, Shirley Denison, he takes a deep interest in church work.

This short and indifferently put together account of an old family is not written in any spirit of bombast, but merely for the object of trying to preserve certain facts that must in the natural course of events pass from view as years go by. People, especially those who have none, sneer at pedigree, but in horses and cattle, all farmers know the absolute necessity of having a good pedigree, so if heredity effects the dumb beasts, why not the human animal.



In the U. S. where "all men are equal," nearly everyone tells you their ancestors came over in the "Mayflower;" which causes one to surmise she must have been as large as the "Great Eastern;" and the same trait may be seen in all nations.

The Denison family have many characteristics, but two stand out prominently. Loyalty to Church and King and originality. The present generation can see this for themselves. In 1812-13 all the family, not too old, marched to the front (and stayed there). In 1837-8 all the family were under arms except R. B. Denison, then only 16, and he and one boy were left at home to look after the big "Bellevue" farm, all the hired men being under arms against the rebels. At the Trent affair 1862, the members of the family were again ready to take the field, and in 1866, the military records speaks for itself when the Fenians were driven out of the country.

I remember one of the family over-stating his age to get there, and Lieut.-Col. R. B. Denison, resigned his Staff appointment to command a Battalion, for fear he might miss the fighting. In 1870 (Red River) Lieut.-Col Fred C. Denison was present on the Staff of the Expedition. In 1885, North West Rebellion, there was a good representation, and two on the Gordon relief expedition up the Nile. In the Boer war two took part, one serving on Lord Roberts' Staff, and one at the Defence of Ladysmith. In the next war I have not the least doubt that the first shot, will bring out any number of the present generation of Denison's; and most likely a few of the previous ones. As to church, the first Denison on record to join the grand old Anglican church, was George Denison, who was born at Leeds, Yorkshire, England, 1715, and I never heard of one of the family joining any other. I have attended divine service in the 70's, at S'Annes church, and the congregation almost all Denison. The responding and singing was the heartiest I ever heard in a small church. None of this frightened whisper business, or squeaky singing so common in our rural churches. Uncle Richard (Col. R. L.) used to say "Amen" as if he meant it and he expected his boys to follow his example.

I mentioned also originality. Capt. John Denison showed this in cutting loose from the old land and trying an untried one. His sons also had the characteristic. The present Colonel Geo. T. Denison is full of it. His Court procedure is his own, and his indifference to lawyers and technicalities are well known. Precedent "cut very little ice" in his Court. Col. Fred Denison, although a Politician had his own idea of right and wrong and did not care two-pence for the "other fellows" or what they did. As in the case of the Jesuit Estate Bill, he stood to his guns, with only twelve other member at his back. Col. R. B. Denison was the same kind of man. His building S'Stephen's church was partly to introduce the free pew system into Toronto, at that time only one church was free, Holy Trinity. His

winning the Sham fight at Niagara, when it was intended and arranged that he be beaten, and licking four men at his front door, when one is the usual number was decidedly original. My illustrious namesake Vicount Ossington was also decidedly original, when he refused the usual pension to a retired Speaker of 4,000 guineas, saying he had plenty to live on without being a tax on the nation.

I have not mentioned the ladies belonging to the Denison family except to name some of them, for fear I should not do their memory justice. Dr. Scadding speaks of Mrs. Sophia Denison, Capt. John Denison's widow as follow: "A fine old English matron and mother, of the antique strongly marked vigorous sterling type. She was one of the Taylors, of Essex, among whom at home and abroad, ability and talent, and traits of a higher and more sacred character are curiously hereditary. Colonel G. T. Denison's (Primus) wife Esther Borden Liggincott, was left alone with her young family, when only 21 years of age, in the dense woods near York, infested at that time with wild animals and Indians, while her husband fought for his country in 1812-13. From what I remember and have been told, the wives of the three brothers, Colonels Richard, George and Robert, would have followed Esther Borden's self-denying example if necessary.

The writer hopes sincerely that the few incidents and anecdotes may prove interesting that are presented here, to the rising generations of Denisons, and that these early Canadian traditions, may be preserved and retold by some one more competent to do it than Robert Evelyn Denison.







